

MENTORSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG NURSING INTERNS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY AT A PUBLIC SECTOR TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL IN PESHAWAR, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Background: Mentorship is a fundamental component of nursing education that facilitates the transition of nursing students into competent healthcare professionals. Effective mentorship enhances clinical competence, professional confidence, and job satisfaction; however, evidence regarding mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns in public sector hospitals of Pakistan remains limited.

Aim: To assess the level of mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Methodology: A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 120 nursing interns selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured, validated questionnaire with a Content Validity Index (CVI) >0.80 and acceptable internal consistency. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics summarized participant characteristics and mentorship satisfaction, while inferential statistics were used to examine associations between study variables. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results: Overall, nursing interns reported a high level of satisfaction with mentorship. Most participants agreed that mentors were approachable (85.9%), treated them with respect and professionalism (86.7%), enhanced their clinical knowledge and practical skills (76.7%), and encouraged ethical, patient-centered nursing practice (85.0%). Furthermore, 81.7% believed that mentorship positively contributed to their professional development, and 75.8% indicated they would recommend the mentorship program to future nursing interns. However, emotional support during challenging clinical situations received comparatively lower satisfaction ratings.

Conclusion: Nursing interns demonstrated an overall positive perception of the mentorship program, highlighting its significant role in enhancing clinical learning, professional development, communication, and confidence. Strengthening mentors' capacity to provide emotional support may further improve mentorship quality and facilitate a smoother transition of nursing interns into professional practice.

Keywords: Mentorship Satisfaction; Nursing Interns; Clinical Mentorship; Clinical Learning Environment; Nursing Education; Tertiary Care Hospital.

INTRODUCTION

Mentorship is defined as an interactive and complex relationship founded on purposeful guidance, encouragement, and role modeling. It fosters the overall development of both the mentor and the mentee across personal, professional, and holistic dimensions. Through shared learning experiences, mentorship facilitates the acquisition of competencies, knowledge, and clinical insight, while simultaneously cultivating an environment of trust, connection, and stability (Empasis & Bacarissas, 2025).

The completion of a one-year hospital-based internship is a mandatory requirement for Bachelor of Science in Nursing students. The primary objective of this internship is to facilitate a smooth transition from the role of a student to that of a registered nurse. During this period, students' clinical performance is supervised by both nursing faculty and clinical nurse managers within the hospital setting. This phase is critical because it significantly shapes students' perceptions of the nursing profession. However, the shift from academic life to professional practice can be demanding and frequently induces anxiety among nursing students in the hospital environment. Consequently, such stressors may negatively affect their learning experience and clinical competence (Victor, Gill, & Khan, 2024).

Furthermore, mentorship programs have been associated with improved retention rates and better work-life balance among newly employed nurses. The transition from student to professional practice represents a critical period for nursing interns, during which mentorship plays an essential role in ensuring a smooth and effective adjustment. In nursing, mentorship is conceptualized as a structured professional

relationship that involves guiding interns through clinical challenges. It contributes to professional development, enhances clinical competencies, and promotes greater job satisfaction. Therefore, a well-established mentoring relationship is vital for the professional growth of nursing interns and substantially supports their emotional well-being as well as long-term retention in the nursing profession (Bilal et al., 2024).

Despite these benefits, it has been reported that fewer than 50% of nursing students would recommend nursing as a career, and 25% would actively discourage others from entering the profession³. Moreover, during this training period, student nurses experience progressive changes in their professional identity that are comparable to role stress (Victor et al., 2024).

Given this context, mentorship plays a pivotal role in shaping the clinical competence and professional attitude of nursing interns. However, limited evidence exists regarding mentorship satisfaction in public sector hospitals in Pakistan. Therefore, the present study aims to explain and assess the level of mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The findings of this cross-sectional study will provide valuable insights to hospital administrators and nursing educators for strengthening mentorship programs and supporting nursing interns during their transition to professional practice.

Objectives:

To assess the level of mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns and identify its associated factors at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Questions

What is the overall level of satisfaction with mentorship among nursing interns at the

designated public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar?

This study holds substantial significance as it addresses a critical transitional phase in nursing education: the progression from nursing student to competent clinical practitioner within the demanding and resource-limited context of public sector tertiary care hospitals in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By systematically evaluating the level and key dimensions of mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns, this research will generate localized empirical evidence to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and complex bedside practice.

Moreover, the findings of this study have direct implications for policy and practice. They can inform hospital administrators and nursing educators in the development of structured and standardized preceptorship frameworks, the rationalization of mentor workloads, and the implementation of formal training programs for clinical mentors. Ultimately, enhancing mentorship satisfaction is expected to strengthen interns' clinical competence and professional socialization, while concurrently contributing to improved patient safety, mitigation of transition shock, and reduced attrition rates among early-career nurses within Pakistan's healthcare system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

A quantitative, descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed to assess the level of mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Study Setting

The study was conducted at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Pakistan. The hospital serves as a major teaching and training institution where nursing interns undergo their clinical internship under the supervision of experienced nursing professionals.

Study Duration

The study was completed over a period of nine (9) months following approval from the Institutional

Review Board (IRB). This duration included proposal development, ethical approval, pilot testing, data collection, data analysis, and report writing.

Study Population

The study population comprised all nursing interns undergoing their clinical internship at the selected public sector tertiary care hospital during the study period.

Sample Size

The sample size was 120 nursing interns, calculated using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator with a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and 50% response distribution.

Sampling Technique

A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants. This method ensured that every eligible nursing intern had an equal probability of being included in the study, thereby minimizing selection bias.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Nursing interns currently enrolled in the internship program at the selected public sector tertiary care hospital.
2. Nursing interns who had completed at least three months of clinical internship, ensuring adequate exposure to mentorship.
3. Nursing interns who were willing to participate and provided written informed consent.
4. Both male and female nursing interns.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Nursing interns with less than three months of internship experience.
2. Student nurses who had not yet started their internship.
3. Nursing interns who were on leave or absent during the data collection period.
4. Nursing interns who declined to participate or submitted incomplete questionnaires.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured through expert review and calculation of the Content Validity

Index (CVI), which was above 0.8. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted on a small group of 10 students (not included in the main study) to refine items and ensure clarity. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to confirm internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining ethical approval and permission from the hospital administration, eligible nursing interns were approached during their clinical postings. The purpose of the study was explained, and written informed consent was obtained. Participants completed the questionnaire anonymously, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencement of the study. Permission was also obtained from the hospital administration.

Participation was voluntary, written informed consent was obtained from all participants, anonymity was ensured, and all collected information was kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were entered, cleaned, and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize participants' characteristics and mentorship satisfaction levels. Inferential statistics, including the Chi-square test (for associations between categorical variables) and independent t-test or one-way ANOVA (where appropriate), were applied to determine the association between mentorship satisfaction and selected demographic variables. A p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Data Analysis:

1. Participant Demographic Profile (N = 120)

Demographic Parameter	Response Sub-category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	91	75.8%
Gender	Male	29	24.2%
Internship Duration	Less than 3 months	12	10.0%
Internship Duration	3–6 months	79	65.8%
Internship Duration	More than 6 months	29	24.2%
Clinical Ward/Unit	Medical	27	22.5%
Clinical Ward/Unit	Surgical	26	21.7%
Clinical Ward/Unit	ICU	15	12.5%
Clinical Ward/Unit	Emergency	16	13.3%
Clinical Ward/Unit	Pediatrics	21	17.5%
Clinical Ward/Unit	Gynecology/Obstetrics	15	12.5%

Assigned Mentor?	Formal	Yes	109	90.8%
Assigned Mentor?	Formal	No	11	9.2%

2. Questionnaire Item Likert Analysis & Complete Descriptive Statistics

Item	Statement	SD / D / N / A / SA (f (%))	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D. (σ)	Var (σ^2)
Section A: Mentor Support							
Q1	My mentor was approachable whenever I needed guidance.	1(0.8%) / 1(0.8%) / 15(12.5%) / 71(59.2%) / 32(26.7%)	4.10	4.0	4	0.70	0.49
Q2	My mentor treated me with respect and professionalism.	0(0.0%) / 6(5.0%) / 10(8.3%) / 51(42.5%) / 53(44.2%)	4.26	4.0	5	0.81	0.66
Q3	My mentor encouraged me to ask questions without hesitation.	5(4.2%) / 9(7.5%) / 18(15.0%) / 60(50.0%) / 28(23.3%)	3.81	4.0	4	1.01	1.03
Q4	My mentor provided emotional support during challenging clinical situations.	5(4.2%) / 15(12.5%) / 42(35.0%) / 33(27.5%) / 25(20.8%)	3.48	3.0	3	1.08	1.18
Section B: Teaching and Clinical Learning							
Q5	My mentor clearly explained clinical procedures and nursing responsibilities.	3(2.5%) / 6(5.0%) / 22(18.3%) / 61(50.8%) / 28(23.3%)	3.88	4.0	4	0.91	0.83
Q6	My mentor helped improve	4(3.3%) / 7(5.8%) /	3.91	4.0	4	0.97	0.94

	my clinical knowledge and practical skills.	17(14.2%) / 60(50.0%) / 32(26.7%)					
Q7	I received constructive feedback that helped me improve my performance.	4(3.3%) / 17(14.2%) / 27(22.5%) / 53(44.2%) / 19(15.8%)	3.55	4.0	4	1.03	1.06
Q8	My mentor encouraged critical thinking and independent decision-making.	5(4.2%) / 13(10.8%) / 18(15.0%) / 56(46.7%) / 28(23.3%)	3.74	4.0	4	1.07	1.13

Section C: Communication and Professional Development

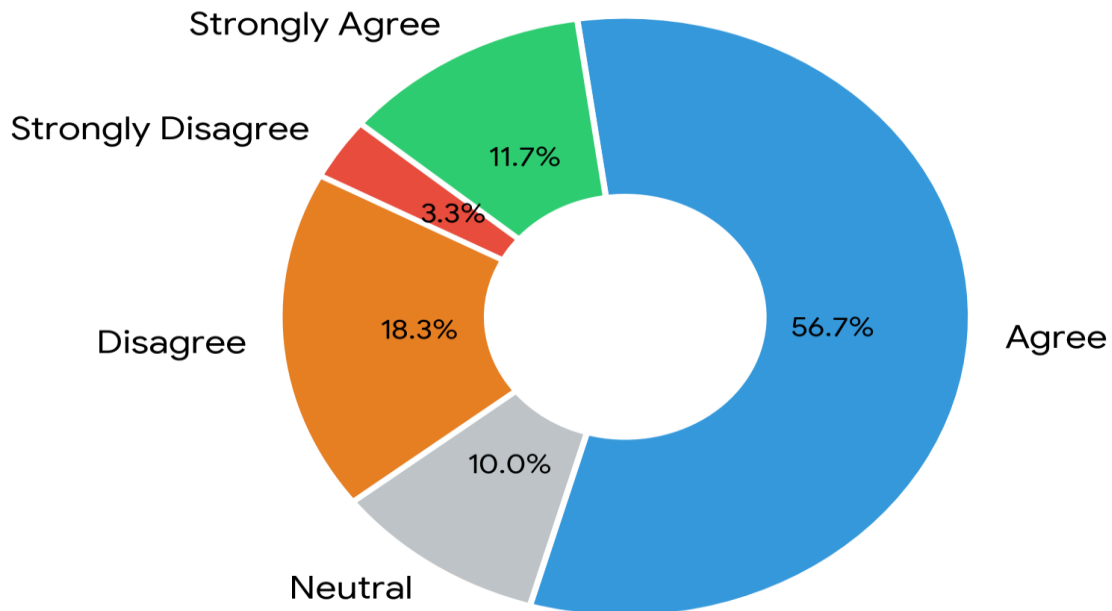
Q9	Communication between my mentor and me was clear and effective.	2(1.7%) / 10(8.3%) / 15(12.5%) / 65(54.2%) / 28(23.3%)	3.89	4.0	4	0.91	0.84
Q10	My mentor served as a positive professional role model.	2(1.7%) / 4(3.3%) / 16(13.3%) / 60(50.0%) / 38(31.7%)	4.07	4.0	4	0.86	0.74
Q11	My mentor encouraged ethical and patient-centered nursing practice.	2(1.7%) / 3(2.5%) / 13(10.8%) / 57(47.5%) / 45(37.5%)	4.17	4.0	4	0.84	0.71
Q12	My mentorship experience increased my confidence in providing patient care.	2(1.7%) / 12(10.0%) / 19(15.8%) / 55(45.8%) / 32(26.7%)	3.86	4.0	4	0.98	0.96

Section D: Overall Satisfaction

Q13	I am satisfied with the quality of mentorship I received during	4(3.3%) / 22(18.3%) / 12(10.0%) / 68(56.7%)	3.55	4.0	4	1.03	1.06
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	my internship.	14(11.7%)					
Q14	The mentorship experience met my learning expectations.	12(10.0%) / 9(7.5%) / 17(14.2%) / 61(50.8%) / 21(17.5%)	3.58	4.0	4	1.16	1.35
Q15	The mentorship program contributed positively to my professional development.	1(0.8%) / 6(5.0%) / 15(12.5%) / 71(59.2%) / 27(22.5%)	3.98	4.0	4	0.79	0.63
Q16	I would recommend this mentorship program to future nursing interns.	5(4.2%) / 8(6.7%) / 16(13.3%) / 51(42.5%) / 40(33.3%)	3.94	4.0	4	1.06	1.11

Overall Mentorship Satisfaction (Item 13 Distribution)



Results Interpretation

The findings of the present study demonstrated that nursing interns generally reported a positive perception of the mentorship program across all four domains. Firstly, regarding mentor support, the majority of participants agreed that their mentors were approachable whenever guidance was required (59.2%), while 26.7% strongly agreed, resulting in a high mean score of 4.10 ± 0.70 . Similarly, participants perceived their mentors as respectful and professional, with 42.5% agreeing and 44.2% strongly agreeing, producing the highest mean score (4.26 ± 0.81). Furthermore, most respondents indicated that mentors encouraged them to ask questions without hesitation, as 73.3% either agreed or strongly agreed, suggesting an open and supportive learning environment. However, emotional support during challenging clinical situations received comparatively lower ratings. Although nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that mentors provided emotional support, a considerable proportion remained neutral (35.0%) or expressed dissatisfaction (16.7%), indicating that this aspect of mentorship requires further improvement. Moreover, the findings related to teaching and clinical learning were highly encouraging. Most nursing interns agreed that their mentors clearly explained clinical procedures and nursing responsibilities (74.1%), while 76.7% acknowledged that mentorship enhanced their clinical knowledge and practical skills. Likewise, 60.0% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they received constructive feedback, which contributed to improved clinical performance. In addition, 70.0% reported that their mentors promoted critical thinking and independent decision-making, highlighting the mentors' positive contribution to developing clinical competence and professional judgment. Additionally, communication and professional development were evaluated positively by the participants. The majority (77.5%) agreed that communication with their mentors was clear and effective, thereby facilitating a productive clinical learning experience. Furthermore, 81.7% considered their mentors to be positive

professional role models, while an even greater proportion (85.0%) agreed that mentors encouraged ethical and patient-centered nursing practice. Consequently, approximately 72.5% of respondents reported that the mentorship experience increased their confidence in providing patient care, indicating the significant role of mentorship in strengthening clinical confidence and professional growth.

Finally, the overall satisfaction findings reflected a favorable evaluation of the mentorship program. More than two-thirds of the participants (68.4%) expressed satisfaction with the quality of mentorship received during their internship, and 68.3% reported that the mentorship experience met their learning expectations. Moreover, a substantial majority (81.7%) believed that the mentorship program positively contributed to their professional development. Most importantly, 75.8% indicated that they would recommend the mentorship program to future nursing interns. Overall, these findings suggest that the mentorship program effectively supported nursing interns' clinical learning, professional development, communication skills, and overall satisfaction. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower ratings regarding emotional support indicate an important area for future improvement within clinical mentorship programs.

Discussion

The present study assessed mentorship satisfaction among nursing interns at a public sector tertiary care hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan. Overall, the findings demonstrated that nursing interns had a positive perception of the mentorship program, particularly regarding mentor professionalism, communication, clinical teaching, and professional development. However, emotional support during challenging clinical situations emerged as an area requiring improvement.

Firstly, the study found that most participants perceived their mentors as approachable and readily available for guidance. The high mean score for mentor accessibility (Mean = 4.10) indicates that nursing interns felt comfortable

seeking assistance during their clinical placement. This finding is consistent with the work of Jokelainen et al. (2011), who reported that mentor accessibility and availability are essential characteristics of effective clinical mentorship and significantly improve students' learning experiences. Similarly, Tuomikoski et al. (2020) concluded that approachable mentors enhance students' confidence and facilitate successful integration into the clinical environment.

Furthermore, mentor professionalism received the highest satisfaction rating in the present study (Mean = 4.26). Most interns agreed that their mentors treated them with respect and professionalism, suggesting that positive interpersonal relationships existed between mentors and mentees. This finding supports the conclusions of Myall et al. (2008), who emphasized that respectful mentor-student relationships promote trust, motivation, and effective clinical learning. Likewise, the findings are consistent with the recommendations of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC, 2018), which highlights professionalism and respect as fundamental attributes of effective clinical supervision.

Moreover, the majority of respondents reported that mentors encouraged them to ask questions and actively participate in the learning process. Such findings indicate that mentors created a supportive educational environment where interns felt comfortable discussing clinical problems. This observation agrees with the findings of Tuomikoski et al. (2020), who reported that open communication between mentors and nursing students improves learning outcomes and enhances clinical competence.

However, emotional support received comparatively lower ratings than other mentorship domains. Although many participants expressed satisfaction, a substantial proportion remained neutral or dissatisfied. This suggests that mentors may focus primarily on technical and clinical teaching while providing relatively less psychological support during stressful clinical experiences. Similar findings were reported by Jokelainen et al. (2011), who emphasized that emotional support is often

overlooked despite its importance in reducing anxiety, improving resilience, and promoting student well-being. Therefore, hospitals should strengthen mentor training programs by incorporating strategies for emotional support and stress management.

Regarding teaching and clinical learning, most participants agreed that mentors clearly explained clinical procedures and helped improve their clinical knowledge and practical skills. These findings demonstrate that mentorship plays an important role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and clinical practice. Similar results were reported by Myall et al. (2008), who found that effective mentorship significantly improves students' clinical competence and confidence. Furthermore, Tuomikoski et al. (2020) concluded that structured mentorship enhances learning opportunities and promotes the acquisition of professional nursing skills.

Additionally, participants positively evaluated the constructive feedback provided by mentors. Most respondents agreed that feedback helped improve their clinical performance. Constructive feedback is considered an essential component of clinical education because it enables students to identify weaknesses and improve their competencies. These findings are consistent with those reported by Jokelainen et al. (2011), who emphasized that regular feedback is strongly associated with improved learning outcomes and professional growth among nursing students.

The findings also demonstrated that mentors encouraged critical thinking and independent clinical decision-making. This result indicates that mentors not only supervised routine clinical activities but also promoted higher-order cognitive skills required for safe nursing practice. Similar observations were reported by Tuomikoski et al. (2020), who concluded that mentorship strengthens clinical reasoning and supports the transition from student to competent practitioner.

Furthermore, communication between mentors and interns was rated positively, with most respondents agreeing that communication was clear and effective. Effective communication is

essential for creating a supportive clinical learning environment and reducing misunderstandings. Likewise, most participants viewed their mentors as positive professional role models who encouraged ethical and patient-centered nursing practice. These findings are supported by Myall et al. (2008), who emphasized that mentors strongly influence students' professional identity, ethical behavior, and confidence through role modelling.

Moreover, the majority of interns reported that mentorship increased their confidence in providing patient care. This finding indicates that mentorship contributes not only to knowledge acquisition but also to self-confidence and professional readiness. Similar conclusions were reported by Tuomikoski et al. (2020), who found that high-quality mentorship enhances self-confidence and facilitates successful transition into professional nursing practice.

Finally, the overall satisfaction results revealed that most participants were satisfied with the quality of mentorship, believed that the mentorship experience met their learning expectations, and stated that they would recommend the mentorship program to future nursing interns. These findings suggest that the mentorship program effectively supported clinical learning and professional development. Similar positive outcomes have been reported by Jokelainen et al. (2011) and Tuomikoski et al. (2020), who concluded that well-organized mentorship programs improve learning satisfaction, professional competence, and the overall quality of nursing education.

Overall, the findings of the present study demonstrate that clinical mentorship is an essential component of nursing internship programs. Although the overall level of satisfaction was high, the comparatively lower ratings regarding emotional support indicate that healthcare institutions should strengthen mentor preparation programs by emphasizing psychological support, communication skills, and stress management strategies. Such improvements may further enhance mentorship quality and ultimately improve both nursing education and patient care.

Recommendations

1. Conduct multicenter studies with larger sample sizes to improve the generalizability of the findings.
2. Undertake longitudinal studies to assess changes in mentorship satisfaction over time.
3. Explore the relationship between mentorship satisfaction and clinical competence, professional development, and job readiness.
4. Use qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights into nursing interns' mentorship experiences.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of structured mentorship programs and mentor training interventions in enhancing mentorship satisfaction.

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